

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-0915

March 11, 2020

The Honorable Donald J. Trump
President of the United States of America
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Trump:

Thank you for your leadership and your Administration's focus on preventing, responding to, and treating outbreaks of COVID-19 (Coronavirus) in the United States. The initial \$8.3 billion funding package you signed into law will provide critical resources to further these efforts.

It is clear that in order to mitigate the impact of the Coronavirus on the American people we must use every tool at our disposal. It has been reported that the Administration is considering a disaster declaration under the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, 42 U.S.C. §§ 5121-5207 (the Stafford Act).

As a member of the Florida Congressional Delegation that serves on the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, I write in strong support of you issuing a Presidential Emergency Declaration.


A disaster declaration would allow the Disaster Relief Fund (DRF), which has a current balance of over \$40 billion, to assist state and local governments in their preparedness and response efforts.

In Florida, it is particularly important that our state and local governments have access to additional resources in preparing for outbreaks. Florida is home to over 4 million seniors, the second highest of any state, comprising approximately 20 percent of the state's population. The Coronavirus is known to exhibit a significantly higher mortality rate among older populations, therefore additional resources are required to safeguard these individuals.

In addition to our significant senior population, Florida is the "Gateway to the Americas" and a major point of ingress to the United States. In 2018, nearly 127 million people visited Florida and the \$1.87 trillion tourism industry accounted for nearly 3 percent of the U.S. GDP. This makes the state particularly vulnerable to travel-related spread and wide-ranging economic consequences as a result of the Coronavirus that must be addressed.

Thank you for your consideration of declaring a national emergency under the Stafford Act. I stand ready to support you and your Administration's actions to mitigate the impacts of the Coronavirus.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Ross Spano', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Ross Spano
Member of Congress